



California State Fire Marshal **CODE INTERPRETATION**

Date Issued	12-05-02	Interpretation #	02-054
Topic	Occupancy Classification of H-8's		
Code Section(s)	§304.2.2.1, 307.5.5, 307.13 and 307.13 California Building Code (1998 ed)		
Requested by	Terry Ferkol NTD Architects 2025 Financial Way #106 Glendora, CA 91741		

1. Where do I find the definition of a Group H, Division 8 and other occupancies?

Chapter 3 of the California Building Code (1998 ed) defines occupancy classifications. Group H, Division 8 occupancies are specifically found in Section 307.

2. What are the relationships between the Group H, Division 8 and other occupancies?

Every building shall be classified by the building official in the group that its use most nearly resembles. Group H, Division 8 occupancies have specific provisions along with other occupancy classifications, which can be found in Chapter 3. Once the occupancy has been determined, all occupancies are required to meet the general requirements outlined in the code.

3. Are fire rated partition separations required between associated rooms and laboratories within the same laboratory suites?

If the building official determines the use of the areas is compatible, a fire separation may not be required. Section 307.2.12, states "Laboratories, shops and similar areas in Group H, Division 8 occupancies shall not require an occupancy separation from each other when the use of the area is determined to be compatible". Classrooms and offices directly related to the use shall not require an occupancy separation.

4. When is the Group H, Division 8 occupancy applicable?

Group H, Division 8 occupancy requirements apply to existing buildings that most nearly resemble the definition in existence at the time of the adoption of the code. Once the authority having jurisdiction has determined that the appropriate occupancy classification is a Group H, Division 8, this section would be applicable to any additions, alterations or repairs.

5. Does it only apply to an existing laboratory that is being altered, modified, extended or repaired?

Yes. This section is specific to existing Group H, Division 8 occupancies.

6. Can a Group H, Division -8 occupancy be used on a new laboratory in a new building?

Yes. A Group H, Division 8 occupancy can be constructed as a new building, but Section 307.13 would not be applicable.

7. Section 304.2.2.1 requires that laboratories have a one-hour rated separation wall around the labs and associated use rooms. Is this regardless of the volume of hazardous waste?

No. The section that you referenced pertains to laboratories and vocational shops classified as Group B occupancies. The quantities of hazardous materials must not exceed those listed in Table 3-D or 3-E. For further information regarding laboratories classified as Group B occupancies, please cross-reference State Fire Marshal Interpretation 01-002 regarding Hazardous Materials Use in Laboratories.